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The 27th Legislature
Second Session

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The Honourable Kenneth R. Kowalski, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 27th Legislature

Second Session

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

3 p.m. **Tuesday, February 10, 2009**

The Sergeant-at-Arms: Order! All rise, please.

[The Clerk read the Royal Proclamation dated January 28, 2009, summoning the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta to convene on this date]

The Clerk: Please be seated.

[The Sergeant-at-Arms left the Chamber]

The Sergeant-at-Arms: Order! Order! Mr. Speaker.

[Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Speaker, accompanied by the officers of the Assembly, entered the Chamber and took the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: Good afternoon, and welcome.

Almighty God, author of all wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, we ask Your blessings on all here present. We ask Your guidance in order that truth and justice may prevail in all of our judgments for the benefit of all Albertans. Amen.

Ladies and gentlemen and hon. members, I would now invite Mr. Paul Lorieau to lead us in the singing of our national anthem, and I would invite all to join in in the language of their choice.

Hon. Members and Guests:

O Canada, our home and native land!
True patriot love in all thy sons command.
With glowing hearts we see thee rise,
The True North strong and free!
From far and wide, O Canada,
We stand on guard for thee.
God keep our land glorious and free!
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

The Speaker: Well done. Please be seated.

Entrance of the Lieutenant Governor

[The Premier, the Clerk, and the Sergeant-at-Arms left the Chamber to attend the Lieutenant Governor]

[The Mace was draped]

The Speaker: Ladies and gentlemen and hon. members, the history of Alberta does not recall an occasion when two Premiers from other Canadian provinces have been present for the presentation of Alberta's Speech from the Throne. Today two Premiers, both the 31st in the history of their respective provinces, are with us.

Premier Shawn Graham was elected as Premier of New Brunswick on September 18, 2006, and his government holds 32 of 55 seats in the New Brunswick Legislative Assembly. Premier Graham, would you please rise and receive the welcome of all present.

Premier Robert W.J. Ghiz was elected Premier of Prince Edward Island on May 28, 2007, and his government holds 24 of 27 seats in the Prince Edward Island Legislative Assembly. Premier Ghiz, would you please rise and receive the welcome of all present.

Hon. members, the Royal Canadian Artillery Band will now play a brief musical interlude, the details of which are included in everyone's program. The RCA Band, Canada's oldest regular army band, was formed in Quebec City in 1879. It was subsequently stationed in Montreal and Halifax. It has seen service in both world wars and in Korea and has travelled across Canada and beyond our borders. Reconstituted in Edmonton in 1997, the band is today under the direction of Captain David Shaw, who is in the Speaker's gallery.

[The Sergeant-at-Arms knocked on the main doors of the Chamber three times. The Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms opened the doors, and the Sergeant-at-Arms entered]

The Sergeant-at-Arms: Ladies and gentlemen, all rise, please.

Mr. Speaker, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor awaits.

The Speaker: Sergeant-at-Arms, admit His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor.

[A fanfare of trumpets sounded]

[Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, Norman L. Kwong, CM, AOE, and Mrs. Kwong, their party, the Premier, and the Clerk entered the Chamber. His Honour took his place upon the throne]

His Honour: Ladies and gentlemen, please be seated.

This is my fifth year delivering the Speech from the Throne, and it occurs to me that I've never taken the opportunity to thank all the members of the Assembly for the kindness and support that you've shown my wife and me throughout this term. Serving as Lieutenant Governor is really one of the best jobs in the province because it's a chance to quarterback and coach a championship Alberta team that does a wonderful job of governing our province and a chance to give back to a place that I'm incredibly proud to call home. So from both myself and my wife, Mary, thank you all for your support.

I was also going to thank the Premier for making this year's speech shorter, but he didn't, so I'll get right to it.

I would like to extend a special welcome to our guests from Canada's east coast: the Hon. Shawn Graham, Premier of New Brunswick; the Hon. Robert Ghiz, Premier of Prince Edward Island; and the Hon. Jack Keir, New Brunswick Minister of Energy. Premier Graham, Premier Ghiz, and Minister Keir, we're most pleased to have you join us not only in our province but also here in this House, where the business of the people of Alberta is conducted.

Speech from the Throne

His Honour: Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the Second Session of the 27th Alberta Legislature. Today it is my honour to deliver the Speech from the Throne as it is my honour to serve this province and its people as Lieutenant Governor.

Facing the Future with Confidence

Ours is a beautiful and blessed province. It has always attracted people of courage and determination, dreamers who saw opportunity here and worked together to realize all the possibilities our land offers. Together the people of this province have faced many challenges over the past century. Tough times bring out the best in Albertans. We always pull together and emerge from adversity even stronger than before. In tough times we have learned the value of

self-reliance and hard work, the need to plan and prepare for the future, and what it means to stand together as a community that looks after its most vulnerable members.

These lessons will guide Alberta as it faces yet another challenge, the global economic uncertainty that is unfolding all around us. Our province is not immune from the turmoil. Far from it. Alberta will face its share of challenges, and government needs to make prudent and realistic decisions to ensure it delivers the things Albertans need at an affordable cost.

But despite the volatile economic times Albertans can face the future with confidence and optimism. We will do what we have always done: adapt, set goals for the future, and move forward in confident pursuit of those goals. Prudent fiscal management has positioned Alberta well. Our province is debt free and has more than $7 billion set aside in the sustainability fund to help protect core programs from roller-coaster revenues. Tax changes, including the elimination of health care premiums this year, will save Albertans and Alberta businesses over $1 billion annually, putting extra money in the economy, a welcome stimulus at a critical time.

These actions are part of your government's economic vision, steps that were taken long before the economic downturn began. They will serve Albertans well by helping our province weather the downturn and positioning our province to be ahead of the curve of the next growth cycle.

Our plan as we navigate through these uncertain times will focus on protecting Albertans and the things that matter most to them while preparing the way for growth to resume as quickly as possible. Our commitment to core programs such as health and education will remain strong, and we will continue to implement the strategic capital plan and other long-term initiatives that form our investment in the future to ensure that Albertans will have the infrastructure and services they need for a return to sustained growth and an increasingly diverse economy.

Creating Opportunity

As a trading province Alberta's future economic success will be built on our ability to compete in a world marketplace. Your government will protect and nurture the business conditions that will allow Alberta companies and entrepreneurs to thrive in markets here at home and around the globe. It will also continue to aggressively promote Alberta products nationally and internationally and bolster Alberta's reputation as a place that welcomes those who want to live, work, invest, and trade with us.

Alberta has advocated strongly for the elimination of interprovincial trade barriers and led by example with our agreement with British Columbia to improve competitiveness and bolster the national economy. Removing these barriers will make Canada more competitive and a more desirable place to invest.

Alberta is also developing a comprehensive new strategy to strengthen international relations with long-time economic partners and identify new markets for Alberta. Of course, our biggest international partner is also Canada's closest friend, neighbour, and ally, the United States. We will build positive relations with the new U.S. administration and support our healthy trading relationship. We will continue to help the U.S. meet its need for a stable and secure supply of energy to power a return to prosperity, and we will demonstrate our commitment to developing our resources in an environmentally responsible way.

Foundations of Our Economy: Energy

Alberta is blessed with world-class energy resources. These have provided broad, sustained wealth creation for Albertans, and they offer long-term energy security for Canada and North America. The royalty changes introduced by government at the beginning of this year set the stage for a renewed partnership between industry and Albertans, the owners of our resources. It is a partnership in which both the rewards and the risks of this volatile industry are more equitably shared.

As outlined in Alberta's first-ever provincial energy strategy, opportunities for further value-added development in Alberta will be pursued in the oil, gas, and petrochemicals industries. This will include a review of Alberta's competitiveness in the energy sector, comprising everything from the cost of materials to the efficiency and effectiveness of regulatory regimes. The goal is to ensure that Alberta continues to attract investment that diversifies the economy, creates good jobs for Albertans, and provides revenues to pay for important programs and services.

The aboriginal consultation policy and guidelines on land management and resource development will be reviewed this year with input from First Nations and industry to ensure the approach to consultation is beneficial to all Albertans.

One area of significant government focus is the oil sands, North America's most promising source of energy for decades to come. While global economic uncertainty has slowed the pace of oil sands development, there is no doubt that this abundant resource will play a key role in building long-term economic growth and energy security for Alberta and Canada. Consumers and businesses around the world will be looking for fossil fuels for generations to come, even as the search for alternatives intensifies. Our goal must be to provide the energy the world needs with an environmental footprint that grows lighter and lighter over time.

Your government will release and implement a comprehensive plan that will responsibly manage the economic, environmental, social, and infrastructure impacts and opportunities of oil sands development. The plan will set out strategies to optimize economic growth in the oil sands while reducing their environmental impact. It will increase co-ordination across all levels of government and stakeholders in developing the oil sands responsibly and enhance accountability in the management of the oil sands. It will foster innovation in science and technology that can solve the unique challenges of oil sands development. There will continue to be an increased emphasis on planning in high-growth communities in the oil sands regions.

With these improvements in mind we must recognize that no leading source of energy today and no source of fossil fuel comes without some environmental consequence. Our goal must be nothing less than to partner with our customers in meeting their energy needs and honouring our mutual commitment to protect the planet for future generations.

Forestry

Our province is blessed with forests that provide social, economic, and environmental benefits for Albertans: protect watersheds, provide fish and wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities, and support industries, jobs, and communities.

Forest companies and the communities they serve have been hit hard by global economic uncertainty, the slowdown of the U.S. housing market, and ongoing business challenges. The Alberta government is working with the province's forestry sector to implement recommendations from the Forest Industry Sustainability Committee's interim report to improve global competitiveness, increase value-added opportunities, and pursue the evolving bioindustry.

Programs to promote healthier forests will include the healthy pine

strategy to manage the spread of the mountain pine beetle, use strategic harvesting to diversify the age of the timber, and lessen the risk of catastrophic wildfire and insect infestations.

Agriculture

Alberta's agriculture and agrifood industries are key economic drivers of our province. However, Alberta's livestock industry continues to deal with many challenges that threaten its sustainability. Your government is working closely with all sectors to implement the Alberta livestock and meat strategy, a long-term plan that will lay the foundation for a profitable and competitive future.

Alberta has already provided significant support to this valuable industry, more than any other jurisdiction across the country. It is important that we uphold the reputation of Alberta beef, pork, and other meat and livestock products as the best in the world. To do this, we must meet the demands of our customers for food safety, public safety, and animal health and welfare.

Building for Tomorrow

Modern, well-maintained infrastructure plays a vital role in our province's economic success and in supporting the high quality of life Albertans enjoy. Infrastructure projects support essential services and represent important economic activity that encourages employment and business across the province.

Unlike many jurisdictions that are going into deficit with infrastructure stimulus packages, Alberta has more than $6 billion in its capital account to continue an aggressive infrastructure program that began years ago. Your government will follow through on its commitment to make significant investments in hospitals, schools, and other public infrastructure to strengthen our communities and help municipalities address growth pressures.

In today's economic environment, now more than ever, this means investing strategically and building responsibly. Keeping a close eye on project scope and budgets, we will work with stakeholders to ensure that facilities are appropriate for the needs of the community and delivered in a timely, cost-effective, and efficient manner.

Showing Environmental Leadership

Albertans live in one of the most spectacular, diverse, beautiful, and healthy natural environments in the world. Generations of Albertans have grown up with an appreciation of and respect for the environment. Our province is a place of many blessings, including landscapes that are both extremely productive and incredibly beautiful.

With the increasing demand for resources felt from all corners of the globe, Alberta's landscapes face increasing pressure for habitat protection, housing, recreation, jobs, and economic growth. To address these pressures, Alberta is pioneering planning tools and new environmental management approaches that consider our province's landscapes across entire regions. The land-use framework will help promote environmental priorities alongside social and economic goals. Cumulative effects management, already being used in Alberta's Industrial Heartland northeast of Edmonton, will be applied next to the oil sands area in conjunction with the land-use framework.

A Plan for Parks

Among Albertans' most cherished spaces are our province's parks and protected areas. Like the rest of the province these areas are also impacted by a growing population and increased use. A new plan for parks will be introduced this year to ensure the long-term sustainability of our natural landscapes, enhance recreational opportunities, and help to improve the quality of life for Albertans. We want to ensure that Alberta's parks inspire people to discover, enjoy, and value the natural world.

Clean Water, Air, and Land

In 2003 Alberta's water for life strategy became North America's most comprehensive water management strategy. Five years later this province has changed: more people, more buildings, more business, and more demands on our water resources. The renewed water for life strategy addresses those changes and provides clear direction for addressing some of the water challenges facing our province. It will ensure that Alberta's precious water resources are the focus of thoughtful, long-term planning and stewardship.

Your government will redouble efforts to ensure that as we meet the needs of energy consumers here and around the world, we provide them with products that are made with environmental care. We will maintain a long-term focus to invest in clean, low-carbon technology, reduce emissions from industry, and support energy-wise choices for consumers.

Alberta pioneered North America's first regulatory system to reduce industrial greenhouse gas emissions. Our system has already generated more than 2 and a half million tonnes of real reductions, but this is only a first step to regulate and reduce emissions. We will continue to learn from our actions, adapt, and grow, and we will continue to work with the federal government to support a cohesive national framework to limit greenhouse gas emissions and do our part as a responsible, sustainable North American energy leader.

This spring the government of Alberta will introduce legislation to facilitate the development of technologies that will help not just Alberta but countries around the world meet the challenge of climate change. The carbon capture and storage implementation act will establish a $2 billion investment in carbon capture and storage. Funding for between three and five projects will be announced this year, resulting in greenhouse gas emission reductions of up to 5 million tonnes annually in Alberta, the equivalent of taking a third of Alberta's vehicles off the road. Even more importantly, these initial projects will set the stage for technological developments that will make carbon capture and storage, real reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, possible in other jurisdictions, including those whose emissions are substantially larger than Alberta's.

Albertans want to do their part to conserve and be energy efficient. Your government will develop an energy efficiency policy framework to help Albertans be wise energy consumers. A consumer rebate program will be introduced to encourage individual actions and energy-wise decisions.

People Thriving in a Skilled Workforce

Inspiring Education

The freedom to create our own future and achieve our dreams so often rests on our enthusiasm for education. This year we will reach out to Albertans to explore their hopes, dreams, and aspirations for their children and learn how we can enable each child to reach his or her full potential. This conversation, called Inspiring Education, will create a long-term vision for K to 12 education in Alberta and develop better ways to offer educational opportunities to our children.

An Environment Where Innovation Flourishes

Your government will help innovation flourish in Alberta. Our province's international reputation is increasingly linked to our

commitment to technology as Alberta becomes known as one of the world's preferred destinations for turning ideas into value-added products and services. New technologies will set the pace of our competitive success and will both harness and fuel our imaginations. We must be prepared to compete with and win against the best in the world when it comes to matching education, capital, and ingenuity to make better products, solve bigger problems, and create a better quality of life.

The Alberta research and innovation act, to be introduced this session, will strengthen and align the entire research and innovation system to help Alberta researchers and entrepreneurs, especially new entrepreneurs, better realize their potential as creators of world-class discoveries and products.

As part of Alberta's action plan for bringing technology to market, entrepreneurs will have access to a new suite of innovation services this year, including more efforts to help spur new product development and match young talent with experienced technology development advisers. A new connector service will help bring companies and international partners together with the many outstanding innovators and organizations in the province, and the Alberta Enterprise Corporation will encourage and leverage international investment.

Our new Campus Alberta philosophy will help nurture this culture of innovation by expanding young minds through our exceptional postsecondary institutions. A revised funding approach will better align resources with learner and labour market demand, focusing on areas that support Alberta's strategic advantage and long-term plan to win in the next generation economy. Alberta's outstanding education system and trades and technology excellence will be showcased to the world at the September WorldSkills competition in Calgary.

Adapting to a Changing Business Environment

Alberta's labour force has a long history of adapting to a changing business environment. Working from the past success of the building and educating tomorrow's workforce strategy, government will set the future direction for investing in our workforce. We will develop a long-term strategy that will look ahead, anticipate growth, and take the steps needed to ensure that Alberta has the talents and skills to create value-added activity, increase innovation, and expand and diversify the Alberta economy.

Your government is also committed to working with First Nations and Métis leaders on a government-to-government basis to increase labour market participation and economic opportunity. This summer the government of Alberta in partnership with Treaty 7 First Nations will present a first-of-its-kind international symposium that will bring together aboriginal and business communities to share and encourage indigenous economic development strategies. The event, called Gathering for Success, will feature over 500 community, business, and aboriginal leaders and high-profile speakers from around the world.

A Healthy Approach

Your government recognizes that Albertans want and deserve an excellent health care system that will be strong and sustainable for the future. Alberta has developed a forward-looking five-part plan for health called Vision 2020. This plan is about meeting the needs of individual patients, their families, and communities in a way that recognizes the role of all Albertans in maintaining their health and improving the way health services are organized, delivered, and used. Under Vision 2020 a primary health care strategy will be introduced to promote the use of interdisciplinary health teams and more flexible workforce arrangements. The strategy will also focus on recruitment and retention of the health workforce needed to deliver high-quality and accessible care.

Rural health care will be enhanced through the integration of ambulance and emergency medical services with other parts of the provincial health system effective April 1, 2009. This will result in improved access to high-quality care in rural areas.

Your government will pursue a three-year action plan on children's mental health, a partnership among government, schools, and communities that will support services and resources for optimal mental health and well-being.

A new drug programs benefit act will be introduced during this session to support the Alberta pharmaceutical strategy. It will make drug coverage more accessible and affordable for lower income Alberta seniors and other vulnerable persons.

The Public Health Amendment Act, also to be introduced this session, will lay a solid foundation for improving public health by strengthening the role and authority of the chief medical officer of health in protecting and promoting Albertans' health.

A health research strategy will be developed and implemented to guide Alberta's investment in health research and ensure that research focuses on innovation and improving health service efficiency and effectiveness.

Strong Communities

Alberta, as we know, is made up of vibrant, inclusive communities, places of opportunity, culture, and belonging where families and children are supported, where the vulnerable are cared for, and where people feel safe. Strong and sustainable municipalities are a key ingredient of strong communities. To foster strong communities throughout the province, your government will provide significant funding to Alberta municipalities through programs like the municipal sustainability initiative.

A Culture of Creativity

Nurturing a culture of creativity and inclusiveness in our province will give Albertans the edge we need to remain competitive with other jurisdictions in Canada and around the world for residents and visitors alike. Last year Alberta hosted its first-ever Arts Day, with events held in communities across the province to celebrate the arts in all its forms. This year the celebration will be expanded to a three-day event called Arts Days, between September 18 and 20. A province-wide campaign will also be launched to promote Alberta's creativity and artistic excellence.

Supporting Children and Families

Your government will support children and families through improvements in high-quality, accessible, and affordable child care options. The government of Alberta has made a commitment to support the creation of 14,000 new child care spaces in our province by 2011, and it is well on the way to reaching that goal. More than 5,500 spaces have been created so far.

This year accreditation will be extended to out of school child care programs to raise the standard of care these programs provide. Accreditation will provide operators with access to grants and wage top-ups to help recruit, retain, and develop staff. It will also help families find quality care for their school-aged children.

Helping Albertans through Tough Times

Your government recognizes that economic uncertainty is putting pressure on Albertans, and some are worried about their futures. We will be there to help Albertans through tough times.

Alberta will deliver on its commitment to develop 11,000 affordable housing units by providing capital funding assistance to municipalities, nonprofit organizations, and the private sector. With more than 5,600 affordable housing units supported since 2007, we are on track to meet this goal.

Alberta Works programs provide a hand up to employment, and these programs will become both more visible and more important in the year ahead. People with barriers to employment will receive information, advice, and assistance. People facing layoffs will receive help in identifying their options, looking for work, or moving into other careers. People wanting to take occupational upgrading will get help to learn new skills for a changing workforce, and new Albertans will be supported as they settle into community life and move into the workforce.

Supporting Seniors and Persons with Disabilities

Your government recognizes and appreciates the contributions seniors have made and continue to make to our province. Alberta will ensure that seniors who need support, persons with disabilities, and others who are vulnerable or in need are well cared for.

Alberta will continue to pursue its new continuing care strategy to help Albertans to age in the right place by increasing access to home care and providing more choice in supportive living options. It will upgrade the physical and functional condition of long-term care facilities. We are committed to improving quality, supply, and client choice in the continuing care system.

This session the supportive living accommodation licensing act will be introduced. This updated legislation will improve the quality of care and monitoring of standards in supportive living facilities.

The Protection for Persons in Care Amendment Act will also be introduced to better protect adults who receive care and support services from government-funded agencies from abuse by improving prevention, monitoring, and follow-up when abuse has been reported.

Bill 1, Protecting the Jobs of Those Who Serve

Albertans value the tremendous sacrifices Canadian military personnel make to protect our freedoms. Along with leaving family and friends when they are called into active service, those in the reserves also leave their civilian jobs. Your government believes those who defend our security should have job security so they can continue to support their families.

We are privileged to have three members of the Canadian Forces reserves with us today: Corporal Tyler Myroniuk of the Loyal Edmonton Regiment, Corporal Nathan Goisnard of 41 Combat Engineer Regiment, and Master Corporal Kevin Fensom of the King's Own Calgary Regiment.

In order to ensure that they and other Alberta reservists are properly protected under the Employment Standards Code, the government will introduce the Employment Standards Amendment Act to provide job-protected leave. The legislation would require the reinstatement of a reservist into the position he or she held prior to the leave or into a comparable position.

Safe Communities

The government of Alberta will push forward on its commitment to strong communities. We will continue to advance initiatives that respond to and build on the recommendations of the safe communities task force. In the year ahead safe communities initiatives will focus on families in crisis, mental health services, immigrant support programs, and addiction and recovery projects.

A new framework for law enforcement will be developed to ensure equitable police funding across the province, improve service delivery, and enhance police governance. Negotiations with the federal government will continue to ensure that the RCMP remains our provincial police service.

Your government is taking a hard look at the impact organized crime is having on Alberta, including the tremendous pressure it puts on the police and the courts. Alberta will host a gang summit this year to address the problem of gangs and gang activity and the impact on our justice system. Your government will introduce a legislative package to disrupt and dismantle organized crime activity. It will include amendments to the Gaming and Liquor Act to give police another tool to help bar owners and staff deal with gang activity. It will also consider tightening the rules around vehicle modification methods used by gang members such as armour-plating and installing bulletproof glass and surveillance cameras.

A key aspect of the work Alberta is doing requires changing legislation at a federal level. Alberta will continue to take the lead in advocating for changes to federal laws to ensure that those who commit serious crimes, including youth, do serious time.

Conclusion

These are certainly challenging times, but Albertans can and should face the future with confidence. Your government remains committed to implementing its plan to support a bright and prosperous future. That plan builds on the steps Albertans and their government have already taken to put our province on a sound footing. It's a plan that goes beyond weathering the current global economic storm to build a springboard to sustainable, diversified long-term growth. It's a plan for education and employment, public health, strong communities, and a culture of innovation. It is a plan that will position Alberta as a committed partner in providing consumers here in Canada and around the world with the energy they need while respecting the environmental values we all share.

Your government will undertake these actions knowing that even in tough times, especially in tough times, it is essential to keep investing in our province and its future. We must continue to welcome people to Alberta to pursue their dreams and build our communities. We must continue to share Alberta's story with people around the world.

Government must do these things, all the while recognizing that its role, while important, is limited. As always, the real authors of our province's success, those who will carry our province forward to an even greater future, are hard-working and innovative Albertans. It is Alberta's people that make our province unique: people who are dynamic and genuine, optimistic and open-minded, people who share the freedom to create and the spirit to achieve. It is Albertans who have made our province great, and together we will continue to build our province for those who will inherit this land that we love.

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, and may God bless you all.

God bless Alberta.

God bless Canada.

God save the Queen.

The Sergeant-at-Arms: Order! All rise, please.

The Speaker: Hon. members, I would now invite Mr. Paul Lorieau to lead us in the singing of *God Save The Queen*. Please remain standing at the conclusion.

Hon. Members and Guests:

God save our gracious Queen,
long live our noble Queen,
God save The Queen!
Send her victorious,
happy and glorious,
long to reign over us;
God save The Queen!

The Sergeant-at-Arms: Order!

[Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, Their Honours, their party, and the Premier left the Chamber as a fanfare of trumpets sounded]

The Speaker: Please be seated.

[The Mace was uncovered]

The Speaker: Hon. members, on December 13, 2008, the Alberta Liberal Party announced that the hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View had been elected its new leader. On December 15, 2008, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview advised me in writing that he was resigning his position as Leader of the Official Opposition effective that date and further requested that the newly elected leader of the Liberal Party of Alberta, the hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View, be recognized as the Leader of the Official Opposition. Please join me in thanking the Member for Edmonton-Riverview for his service as Leader of the Official Opposition. [applause]

As of this day the Chamber recognizes the hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View as the Leader of the Official Opposition in the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View becomes the 29th different person in Alberta's history to serve in that capacity and Alberta's 30th Leader of the Official Opposition. One person served twice, at two different times. That is the reason for the difference in the numbers. To the new hon. Leader of the Official Opposition, congratulations and welcome.

[The Premier returned to the Chamber]

Tablings

The Speaker: Hon. members, I have the honour to table a copy of the Speech from the Throne graciously given by His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor.

Introduction of Bills

The Speaker: The hon. the Premier.

Bill 1
Employment Standards (Reservist Leave) Amendment Act, 2009

Mr. Stelmach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Albertans have a deep respect – a deep respect – for all those who serve our country in Canada's armed forces. They help during times of emergency, they protect our borders, and they serve abroad to bring safety and preserve freedom around the world. For reservists this is a calling pursued by those who are otherwise civilians and who have careers outside the military. The need for regular training and the call to active service sometimes require absences from nonmilitary careers. We value the contributions that these brave people make and think it is only fair that they have jobs to return to when their service to Canada is done.

Mr. Speaker, therefore I request leave to introduce Bill 1, the Employment Standards (Reservist Leave) Amendment Act, 2009.

This amendment will provide Canadian Forces reservists in Alberta with unpaid, job-protected leave while they're away from their civilian jobs serving our country. In addition, reservists will be entitled to leave of up to 20 days each calendar year for training. The government of Alberta already offers these provisions for reservists who are members of the Alberta public service. If passed, this bill would ensure that all Alberta reservists will have similar protections in place, and they will know that they can continue to provide for their families by having jobs to come home to.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill 1 read a first time]

Motions

Mr. Stelmach: Mr. Speaker, I now move that the speech of His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor to this Assembly be taken into consideration Wednesday, February 11, 2009.

[Motion carried]

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the Assembly do now adjourn until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 4:01 p.m. to Wednesday at 1:30 p.m.]

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